

REMARKS

Please reconsider the rejection in view of the following remarks.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-4 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 3 are independent. Claims 2 and 4 directly depend from claims 1 and 3, respectively.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. Sho. 36-12194 ("Nakanishi"). For the following reasons, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

One or more embodiments of the present application are directed to methods for purifying alcoholic liquors prepared from grains. Alcoholic liquors often contain fragrance components, flavor components, mineral components, aldehydes, inorganic salts, and the like. Of these, aldehydes and inorganic salts are preferably removed by purification. However, it is preferable to retain fragrance and flavor components such as ethyl acetates and organic acids after purification. Advantageously, embodiments of the present application provide for the efficient removal of aldehydes and inorganic salts from alcoholic liquors while strongly retaining fragrance and flavor components.

Accordingly, independent claim 1 requires “wherein after passing alcoholic liquors through an HSO₃ type strongly basic anion exchange resin layer, or after adding an HSO₃ salt to alcoholic liquors; the alcoholic liquors are passed through a mixed bed layer containing of an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin and *a free base type weakly basic anion exchange resin*, or the alcoholic liquors are successively passed through an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin layer and *a free base type weakly basic anion exchange resin layer*.” Claim 3 similarly includes “a mixed bed layer containing of an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin and *a free base type weakly basic anion exchange resin*, or an ion exchange device for successively passing the alcoholic liquors through an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin layer and *a free base type weakly basic anion exchange resin layer*”

By combining *a free base type weakly basic anion exchange resin* with an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin, the amount of retention of a fragrance component and a flavor component in the alcoholic liquors after the purification may be increased, so as to effectively remove aldehydes and inorganic salts while retaining individuality of the alcoholic liquors as much as possible (*see*, for example, paragraph [0021] in the published application).

Nakanishi, in contrast, does not disclose or suggest at least the above limitation. Rather, Nakanishi discloses a method for purifying alcoholic liquors using a mixed bed containing of an H type *strongly acidic cation exchange resin* and an OH type *strongly basic anion exchange resin*. Additionally, Nakanishi does not provide any motivation to modify its teaching to produce the claimed invention for the reason set forth below. As discussed above, one or more embodiments in the present invention are directed to a method of purifying alcoholic liquors, whereby effectively removing aldehydes and inorganic salts while retaining individuality of the alcoholic liquors as much as possible. Nakanishi, in contrast, is directed to a method of

purifying alcoholic liquors, for the purpose of solely efficient removal of aldehydes and inorganic salts.

In fact, as stated in the present application, applying a mixed bed containing of an H type strongly acidic cation exchange resin and an OH type strongly basic anion exchange resin, such as that disclosed in Nakanishi, removes fragrance and flavor components such as ethyl acetates and organic acids as efficiently as aldehydes and inorganic salts in the purification process (see, Table 1, and paragraph [0035] and [0039] in the published application).

In view of the above, Nakanishi fails to show or suggest the invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 3. Thus, independent claims 1 and 3 are patentable over Nakanishi. Dependent claims 2 and 4 are also allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 08228/094001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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